

Blastobasis lignea Wlsm. + *adustella* Wlsm.

"In a single specimen the darker shading is more conspicuous, and the two inner spots are merged in an angulated fascia, leaving the dorsal margin at one-third and tending obliquely outwards to the disc before the middle, where it is angulated back towards the costa from what should be the position of the upper spot; but, before reaching the costa, it is again bent upwards and slightly outwards to the margin. Abdomen very pale cinereous, the segments marked by narrow greyish fuscous transverse lines. *Exp. al.* 19 mm."

Type ♀ (13697), **B.M.** (Mus. Wlsm.).

Hab. MADEIRA; one specimen.

"Intermediate varieties in which the fascia is slightly indicated appear to occur, but I have no specimens before me in condition for comparative description."

The capture of *Blastobasis lignea* Wlsm., in some numbers during the last few years by Mr. A. E. Wright, at Grange-over-Sands (Lancashire), is of extreme interest, as it adds not only a species, but a genus and also a family to our lists. I am not aware that, with the exception of Mr. Wright's specimens, this species has been taken anywhere but in Madeira. The first British specimens I saw belonged to the variety *adustella* Wlsm., and tended to confirm an opinion held by Lord Walsingham and myself, that the variety, founded on a single specimen, was probably distinct, but the receipt of other specimens from Grange-over-Sands showed that the species was even more variable than we had thought. The variety *adustella* is an extreme form, but the best one by which to remember the species. Variation from *adustella* takes place in the loss of the strong markings, such specimens being pale and inconspicuous; in the other direction a brownish suffusion produces *lignea*, and some specimens are very dark fuscous (Drnt.).

AN ENTOMOLOGICAL HOLIDAY IN S. FRANCE.

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The insects here noted were collected in the course of a short holiday in the south of France, in May, 1921, in the company of Mr. Hugh Main. The prime object of our trip was the observation, and the photographing in their natural haunts, of the insects that form the subject of the late J. H. Fabre's fascinating series of "Souvenirs Entomologiques," especially of those that cannot be observed in this country. In the short time at our disposal we could not of course hope to discover anything like all of these, and the time of year chosen was too early for many of them, yet the exhaustion of Mr. Main's supply of plates and the running short of our stock of collecting boxes sufficiently demonstrate that we found a very satisfactory proportion of them. Many of the pictorial records of the trip, which were the work entirely of Mr. Main, were on view at the Exhibition of Nature

Photographs held at the rooms of the Royal Photographic Society in February last.

Our trip was divided into two portions—from the 7th to 15th May at Hyères, from which short excursions were made by road or rail to Carqueiranne to the west and Le Lavandou to the east; from the 17th to the 29th May at La Sainte Baume, a locality of which an excellent account from a butterfly-hunter's point of view by the late Rev. F. E. Lowe has already appeared in our pages ('Entom.' vol. xlvii, 1914, pp. 14-20, 60-63). Mr. Main had previously visited this locality in July, 1920, and an account supplementary to Mr. Lowe's is given by Mr. Bethune Baker, who was there at the same time, in 'Ent. Record,' 1921, pp. 101-105. This valley is about 2000 ft. above sea-level, and at the time of our visit the insects as well as the plants were found to be about three weeks later than the same species in the neighbourhood of Hyères.

Though collecting was not our prime object, and was not indeed attempted with any degree of thoroughness, yet a very fair bag was secured. As regards *Rhopalocera*, for example, series were not collected—merely a few samples of the different species noted. Although our stay was five weeks earlier than that of Mr. Lowe, and only half as long, the number of species we secured was exactly half the number recorded by him, viz. 37 compared with 74: Twenty-three of those found at Ste Baume were the same as noted by him, and the following mostly spring species were found in addition to those noted by either Mr. Lowe or Mr. Bethune Baker: *Thais medicicaste*, *Euchloë tagis*, *E. cardamines*, *E. euphenoides*, *Leptidea duponcheli*, *Melitaea aurinia*, *Nemeobius lucina*, *Everes argiades f. coretas*, *Lycaena sebrus*, *L. cyllarus*, *L. melanops*, *Nisoniades tages*, and *Hesperia sidae* (for these identifications I am indebted to Mr. Riley).

By a mere accident a method of sending these home was discovered that will perhaps repay further trial. The butterflies were papered in the usual way, ordinary newspaper being used, and the envelopes packed in tin boxes which had been moistened with glacial acetic acid, and, owing to corrosion, were useless for the living insects for which they were intended. For some weeks the butterflies remained limp and in perfect condition for setting, and showed no tendency to develop mould.

Of insects of other orders the following are perhaps of interest, the letters (H.) and (S.B.) after the name signifying Hyères and Ste Baume respectively.

Orthoptera.

FORFICULIDÆ.

Anisolabis moesta, Gén  (S.B.).

Forficula decipiens (H.).

„ *pubescens*, Gén  (H.).

BLATTIDÆ.

Ectobia albicincta, Br. (S.B.), ♀ ♀ and young.

„ *vittiventris*, Costa, 1 ♂ recently mature.

Loboptera decipiens, Germ. (H. and S.B.), in all stages, and by far the commonest species. All these and the Forficulidæ were found beneath stones.

MANTIDÆ.

Empusa egea, Charp. (H.), ♂ ♂ only and egg-cases; (S.B.) egg-cases only.

Mantis religiosa, L. (H.), young and egg-cases; (S.B.) egg-cases only.

The young *Mantis* and egg-cases of both species were brought home, but the former soon died, and the latter have completely failed to produce either young Mantids or parasites.

PHASMIDÆ.

Bacillus gallicus, Charp. (H.), young only, which fed up well on rose, all, as usual, turning out to be ♀. These only lived a few weeks, but have deposited a fair number of eggs.

GRYLLIDÆ.

Gryllus campestris, L. (H. and S.B.). Abundant everywhere, especially on the margins of cultivated ground. Their presence appeals, both by day and by night, very much more to the ear than to the eye—in fact it was not till we commenced systematically to search for them at Ste Baume that we actually found them at all. But once we had discovered their burrows it was easy to find as many as we required. The ♂ ♂ were much more numerous than the ♀ ♀, or at any rate appeared to be so, and many of the latter, when dug up, were found to be immature. They lived for some time in captivity, ovipositing freely in earth, but we were unsuccessful in rearing the young crickets above about 1 cm. in length.

G. desertus, Pall. (H.), 1 ♀.

G. burdigalensis, Latr. (H.), 1 ♂.

Gryllotalpa gryllotalpa, L. (H.), 1 immature specimen under a stone.

ACRIDIIDÆ.

Acridium aegyptium, L. (H.). The ♀ was much more common than the ♂. On seeing this huge insect start from a low bush just in front of one and settle in a cork-oak a few yards away, it was difficult to believe that it was not a bird.

Odonata.

Crocothemis erythrea, Br., *Sympetrum striolatum*, *Aeschna mixta*, *Brachytron hafniense*, *Calopteryx haemorrhoidalis*, *Lestes barbarus*, *Sympycna fusca*, *Pyrrhosoma nymphula*, *Agrion mercuriale*, *A. puella*.

All these were taken on a single day at Hyères Plage, and that only in the afternoon when our time was getting very short. To British collectors it appeared strange to find *Sympetrum striolatum* and *Aeschna mixta* in mid May; *Sympycna fusca* is well known to hibernate, and the single ♀ found is obviously not freshly emerged. For the identifications I am indebted to Mr. H. Campion.

Neuroptera.

ASCALAPHIDÆ.

Ascalaphus longicornis (H. and S.B.).

A. libelluloides (S.B.).

On this occasion *A. longicornis* was found only at Hyères, but it was taken by Mr. Main at Ste Baume in July, 1920. A long search for the larvæ under stones at both places (a search encouraged by each of us finding one, and one only), and that in spots where the adults were common, appears to demonstrate that though the larvæ may occasionally be found in these situations such are not their *usual* haunts. Unfortunately, though one of the larvæ moulted once, we could not get them to feed properly and both died.

MYRMELEONIDÆ.

Myrmeleon formicarius (H. and S.B.), larvæ only.

The well-known pits of these insects were found in plenty in both localities, sometimes on sheltered ledges of rock faces, sometimes on open stretches of sand, even on the sea-shore. It is not certain that these were all of one species, as unfortunately the larvæ were not kept distinct. The only flies to emerge in August were of this species.

Palpares libelluloides (H.). Larvæ only. These were found in some numbers on the landward side of a low ridge of sandhills bordering the sea. They form no pit, like *Myrmeleon*, and the only sign of their presence was a few dead beetles and other insects on the sand. On running the hand over the surface of the sand, immediately beneath which they lie, the larvæ, large and small, were easily turned out and discovered. No flies emerged during the summer, and no cocoons were formed, though the larvæ fed well until the autumn. During the winter they have been kept in an unheated room and not fed at all. A few have died, but

most are still (April 2nd) alive though very sluggish. Mr. Main had taken the flies in the Ste Baume neighbourhood in the previous July, but a long search on the few bare sandy patches at that spot failed to produce any more larvæ.

SIALIDÆ.

Sialis fuliginosa (S.B.). A single specimen.

CHRYSOPIDÆ.

Chrysopa vulgaris (S.B.)

C. prasina (H. and S.B.).

Of **Coleoptera** about 300 species were taken—a list far too long to be inserted here. Of these over 180 were taken at Hyères, while only 38 were found common to both places—figures which indicate the strong Mediterranean element in the coastal fauna. Of this total 104 species find a place on the British list.

Particularly interesting were the sea-shore species, the giant *Scarites*, *Pimelia bipunctata*, *Tentyria mucronata*, *Formicomus pedestris*, etc. The flowers of *Cistus* on the hillsides were very prolific, *Bruchidae* being represented by 13 species, *Oedemera* by 7, *Mycterus curculionoides*, various *Dasytids*, *Cetoniids*, etc., while the flowering oaks and pines were sometimes swarming with *Omophlus*; At Ste Baume on the other hand the distinctive feature compared with Hyères was given by those groups with wood-boring larvæ, *e.g.* Longicorns with 11 species as against 7 at Hyères, *Buprestidæ* with 6 species against 2 at Hyères, *Scolytidæ* with 5 species to none at Hyères, and so forth.

For the **Hymenoptera**, to which so much attention was devoted by Fabre, we were too early, though about fifty species were captured, including the fine *Xylocopa violacea* and *X. cyanescens*, while *Chalicodoma muraria* was nidifying in plenty on the walls.

Enough has perhaps been said to give an idea of the possibilities of the district to those of us in search of pastures new. The attractions of collecting on the Continent have long been realised by our lepidopterists (I should perhaps say our rhopalocerists!), but as regards other orders, except for a very limited number of coleopterists, the Continent is indeed to British entomologists a *terra incognita*. Signs, however, are not wanting that interest in the Continental fauna is now waking, thanks chiefly to the English translations of Fabre's accounts of his beloved insects.

